Educating World Citizens–Empirical Implications and the Contribution of Geography Education

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Abstract

Against the theoretical background of world society and learning challenges related to globalization processes the article deals with empirical findings from two qualitative-reconstructive studies on learning experiences of young people. The first is a study on young people in Germany engaged in child sponsorship programmes for children in the Global South and the second a study on learning experiences of young people in Bolivia, Germany and Rwanda who participated in North-South encounters. Beyond their specific thematic focuses, these studies reveal the challenges of abstract learning regarding complex issues in world society on a more general level. The findings indicate the limits of solely informal learning opportunities regarding global issues and consequently point to the relevance of formal learning. In the discourse on global learning in schools, geography education plays an important role and is often considered a key subject with regard to teaching the global dimension. The article addresses the challenges of geography education in enabling learning processes regarding global issues.

Keywords

Global Citizenship Education, Global Learning, World Society, Geography Education

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In times of globalization and an ongoing development into a global society, the educational requirements of schools change into what Oelkers (2009) calls "globalized educational requirements". Schools today face the challenge of introducing the younger generations to a world in which complex global relationships shape everyday life. In this context the school itself is a place where consequences and effects of globalization become visible, for example, in an international and intercultural composition of the student body. At the same time, however, the school remains a locally anchored and nationally organized institution. *Against this background, the question arises of the possibilities and challenges of educating global citizens at school: How can schools open up perspectives for life in a globalized world society and what is the role of geography teaching in this context?* These questions are at the centre of this paper. In order to answer these we will (1) introduce the term "world society" and describe learning challenges arising in a global context, (2) present two settings aimed at opening up experiences of world society within a school context, (3) present empirical results on experiences of young people engaged in these two settings, and (4) discuss the findings in the light of the overall question of the paper.

Theoretical background

World Society as a Learning Challenge

The term "world society" refers to Luhmann's (1997) descriptive theoretical conceptualization of a complex and functionally differentiated social system constituting itself over boundless, global communication. According to Luhmann, society today can only be described as a world society, since communication independent from a global context is no longer possible. No society can be understood as independent from the global context and accordingly every society today is world society. As a consequence, the world society is characterized by great complexity, as social reality becomes more complex in the global context. Scheunpflug (2011) identifies the characteristics of world society in four dimensions. In a *spatial dimension*, we can witness what the British sociologist Robertson (1995) calls ‚glocalisation': Through new technologies, globalisation delimits space while at the same time the local remains a central category for individual life and action. In addition, Castells (2002) points to the development of new forms of social structures, organised as networks and independent from national states. In a *factual dimension*, there are complex global challenges such as the vast economic differences in the world, the increasing consumption of resources as well as the frequent disregard of human rights. In a *temporal dimension*, globalisation processes imply an acceleration of social change, partly through enhanced forms of communication. *Socially*, "[t]he distinction between what seems strange or familiar is no longer only a geographical or spatial issue" (Scheunpflug, 2011, p. 35), which points to what Appadurai (1990) refers to as social fragmentation.

According to Scheunpflug (2011) globalization and the corresponding development of world society carry multiple challenges for learning. In a complex world individuals need to learn and to develop competences to deal with knowledge and any lack of knowledge (factual dimension), to deal with certainty and uncertainty (temporal

dimension), to deal with familiarity and strangeness (social dimension) and to deal with local relationships as well as with new meanings of space (spatial dimension). In summary, these learning challenges refer to the development of an abstract sociality. Today life takes place in a vast and confusing world society and people have to deal with and manage human co-existence in a worldwide context. This includes dealing with global issues that refer to an increasing dependency and co-existence of people all over the world. These people do not and will never know each other, they do not speak the same language and do not maintain similar ways of life – yet they and their individual life prospects are connected via complex and therefore hard to grasp interrelations. Living together and interacting on a global scale is to a large extent anonymous and abstract. From an evolutionary perspective, it is this complexity and abstract quality of the world society that is a challenge for humans who prefer sensorily perceivable surroundings and whose problem solving abilities are oriented towards the 'local' (cf. Scheunpflug & Asbrand, 2006). This orientation entails challenges in the perception and understanding of complex global issues and makes learning with regard to a cognitive understanding of abstract social relations necessary (Scheunpflug & Schröck, 2000, p. 7).

Learning Word Society at School

Schools today are faced with the challenge of addressing the learning challenges that result from globalization and the development of the world society in order to educate world citizen and equip learners with 21st century skills. Part of dealing with these challenges is encouraging the acquisition of foreign languages and including global topics in the curriculum of different subjects, most importantly in geographical and political education. In Germany, for example, a framework for learning in the context of global development was implemented to give curriculum guidance to schools and teachers (KMK & BMZ, 2016). In addition to addressing global topics in lessons of certain subjects, schools often attempt to partly overcome their own (local and/or national) boundaries, and to provide opportunities for *experiencing* world society. Such settings are integrated in the school context, are meant to complement and intensify lesson based learning and are linked with certain expectations with regard to hereby initiated learning experiences. Two exemplary settings used in schools to encourage learning with regard to world society are child sponsorships and North-South school encounters.

Child sponsorships are a common option for people in so-called industrialised countries to support a sponsored child in a country of the Global South. The money is donated to a non-governmental developmental organisation that runs programmes in the respective country from which the sponsored child benefits. In response to paying monthly contributions, the donors receive information about the child, the superordinate development project and also the child's country. In addition, sponsors can communicate with the sponsored child via letters. Child sponsorships are therefore characterised by three aspects: They are based on regular donations, they are grounded on the idea of supporting individual children, and they involve a form of regular

personal reporting to the sponsors (Watson & Clarke, 2014). Sponsorships are therefore low-threshold options for supporting global developmental efforts and at the same time a form of personal relationship in the North-South context. As a tool for international aid, child sponsorships point to the problem of serious social disparities and pronounced economic differences in the world. At the same time, complex social questions, e.g. the question of unequal living conditions, are reified as individual support relationships between people in countries of the Global North and people in countries of the Global South. As a means to promote the development of solidarity with people living in challenging and precarious life circumstances at different places of the world and in order to encourage learning with regard to global social issues, sponsorship is undertaken by schools or individual school classes. When pupils take on sponsorships, for example as part of their lessons or as an extracurricular activity, the sponsorship is therefore expected to raise awareness of global societal challenges. Despite these expectations, the learning experiences taking place in the sponsorship context have so far not been researched (Wagener, 2018a).

The second setting to encourage learning with regard to world society is North-South school encounters. These are often embedded in a (long-term) school partnership and offer a face-to-face encounter between students from the Global North and the Global South. Students from the Global South travel to the Global North and vice versa, in order to spend three to four weeks with the partner students, visiting school, sightseeing and working on joint projects. Besides the objectives of getting to know the culture, country, and environment the partner students live in, those encounters are often seen as instruments to promote intercultural and Global Learning (Disney, 2004, 2005; Pickering, 2008; Leonard, 2007, 2014). Through the direct encounter and the experience of living in a different part of the world, the encounter should help student to see their own life as being part of a global context and foster competences for living in the world society. This often goes with the normative claim to develop solidarity with people in the Global South and to motivate student engagement after the encounter (Krogull, 2011). Even though a lot of research has been carried out on intercultural learning (cf. Banks 2014), political perspectives of youth (cf. Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schulz 2001) or the impact of international youth encounters (cf. Thomas, Chang & Abt 2007) the aspect of how young people understand world society after participating in a North-South encounter has been neglected (Krogull 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, these two settings aim at expanding the perspective of societal learning towards the global context and thereby at "transcending the societal, immediate personal sphere" (Scheunpflug 2017, p. 13). In different ways and to different extents both settings open up opportunities for experiencing global diversity, complex inequalities and, in particular, economical differences in the world. These two settings and the related experiences of young people engaged in these were at the core of two qualitative reconstructive research projects. The two studies aimed at reconstructing global orientations of young people who either engage in child sponsoring or who have been participating in a North-South encounter setting. The goal was to get an account of how young people, in the context of these two specific settings, understand, perceive and think about the world society – and to thereby develop a

comprehensive picture of the sponsorship-related and encounter-related learning processes with regard to world society. Such empirical results then allow for a broader reflection on possibilities and limitations of global education at schools.

Methods

In both research projects a qualitative-reconstructive design was applied. The so-called documentary method of analysis (Bohnsack, 2010) was used to analyse data gathered in group discussions (Loos & Schäffer, 2001).

Data Collection and Sampling Process

In the first project[3], group discussions were conducted with young people in Germany who sponsor a child in a country in the Global South. In the second project[4], 20 group discussions were held with young people from and in Bolivia, Germany and Rwanda who had participated in North-South-encounters. In both studies, one focus was on young people who engage in these settings as part of their school activities. For the context of child sponsoring this means that a school class or sometimes even a whole school is sponsoring a child. Concerning the North-South encounters, students belonged either to the school's partnership committee, came from a language class, or signed up for the trip out of interest (Global North). In the Global South, students were mostly chosen on merit or based on their grades. This means that most of the students traveling together were not necessarily part of the same class or school group.

Both research projects used a theoretical sampling process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This means that at the beginning groups were chosen according to theoretical sampling criteria (e.g. differences in age, school type or country) which were identified based on existing knowledge from other studies in the field of Global Learning (cf. Asbrand 2009). In the proceeding process of analysis, however, groups were then added according to aspects that were identified as relevant in the analysis of the discussions. Each group consisted of 2 to 8 participants. In both studies, the participants were part of a larger group of students who together participated in a North-South encounter or are involved in child sponsoring. In both studies, the students volunteered to participate in the group discussions. The group discussions for the sponsoring project were conducted between October 2013 and March 2015, the discussions with students who had participated in North-South encounter settings were conducted between 2007 and 2012.

Data Analysis

The documentary method (cf. Scheunpflug, Krogull & Franz, 2016) is based on Mannheim's sociology of knowledge (1980) that distinguishes between communicative-generalizing and conjunctive forms of knowledge. While communicative-generalizing knowledge refers to explicitly available and therefore communicable knowledge, conjunctive knowledge describes implicit, action-guiding knowledge, which individuals

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mostly cannot verbally express. It refers to "knowledge stocks that are not located on the surface of conscious and clear explicable attitudes and values, but which are beneath the surface and affect behaviour indirectly" (Scheunpflug, Krogull & Franz, 2016, p. 10). This conjunctive knowledge is based on experiences (e.g. child sponsoring, encounter journey) that groups of individuals share with one another. The analysis follows this distinction and aims at reconstructing implicit tacit knowledge using two different steps of analysis. In a first step (formulating interpretation), the analysis focusses on »what« the young people talk about and on what they say in terms of content. This step aims at extracting explicit and communicative forms of knowledge. This focus then shifts towards »how« they talk about and discuss certain issues in the second step (reflecting interpretation). From a methodological perspective, this analysis allows the reconstruction of implicit knowledge structures also referred to as orientations (Scheunpflug, Krogull & Franz, 2016, p. 9). The comparative analysis of all the group discussions in the respective research projects then led to the development of an ideal typology of orientations within the settings of child sponsoring and North-South-encounter journeys (see Bohnsack, 2007; Nentwig-Gesemann, 2013, and Nohl, 2013 for information on the process of typification within the documentary method).

Findings

Young Sponsors in Child Sponsoring

The first learning situation to be addressed here is the establishment of child sponsorships at German schools. The respective research project focused on the learning experiences of young people in Germany who are engaged in child sponsorship programmes for children in countries of the Global South as part of their school curriculum. The aim of collecting data through group discussions is to generate an account of the participants' experiences. Each discussion started with the following open stimulus: "I am here today, because you are engaged in sponsoring a child in [country]. Can you tell me about your sponsorship?" While the groups were discussing their experiences the researcher withdrew from any further commenting but only listened to what the participants were saying. This ensured that the participants talk about what is relevant for them and are not limited by the ideas of the researchers. In case the groups had not talked about these aspects during the discussion, further open stimuli concerning the sponsored child and the sponsoring activities of the group were given ("Can you tell me about the child", "Can you tell me what you do in sponsoring"). In the following, selected results of this study are presented and discussed with regard to school learning regarding a better understanding of world society.

A central result of the study is that the sponsorship is experienced as a care situation, in which the young sponsors themselves participate as givers and the child in the Global South acts as the recipient of the welfare relationship. The empirical evidence shows that primarily economic differences between the two sides are decisive for the construction of this asymmetry: while the young sponsors consider themselves as materially and economically superior and thus in the position to help, they perceive the sponsored child as characterised by neediness. Young sponsors in Germany therefore

construct themselves in an asymmetrical relationship with the person they support, a child in a country of the Global South.

The analysis of the group discussions of young sponsors led to the identification of three types of orientations in the world society representing different ways of dealing with (global) asymmetry in the context of sponsoring. In the following, two of these different orientations with regard to this fundamentally asymmetric conceptualization of the sponsorship setting will be presented, each on the basis of an example extract from one of the discussions.[5] While the first type presented here is characterised by processes of concretisation in which the construction of a personal connection towards the individual sponsored child is central, the second type is defined by processes of generalisation through which the Global North and the Global South appear as total contrasts with the former being superior to the latter. These differences become visible in the comparative analysis of the group discussions. In the following two excerpts, young sponsors from different groups talk about gifts that they want to give or have given to their respective sponsored child.

Concretisation. The type of concretisation was developed as an ideal type by means of various group discussions of the sample, but will be exemplarily illustrated below with excerpts from the discussions of group Lapwing[6] and group Cockatoo. Group Lapwing, from whose discussion the following excerpt is taken, consists of six boys and girls of the sixth grade. The young people of this group talk about their wish to send their sponsored child, Anastasia, a duck cuddle toy as a present. The young students describe that they were told that Anastasia, who lives in Ecuador, likes ducks and that they had therefore wanted to surprise her with a special present:

Group Lapwing, Passage "Duck", 0:13:22 – 0:14:36, l. 1-17[7]

Em   yes and Anastasia we we were … also told likes ducks and then we have sent
      letters and then some of us have drawn ducks on these−

Af   yes

Em   but we don't know now whether these arrived−

Df   yes

Af   no and we wanted to … so Mia had the idea I think … a little duck cuddle toy
      but we were not allowed to do that

Df   yes but we were not allowed to do that because of the customs dues

Af   yes … and there they have a−

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[5]The three types reconstructed in this study are ideal types (Weber, 1968) that can be identified in different group discussions. For a detailed reconstruction of the types from the entire sample of the study see Wagener, 2017a.

[6]For reasons of anonymization, the groups were named after different types of birds. Moreover, all names of countries, sponsored children and other names mentioned in the discussions have been changed. Participants of the discussions were lettered with f for female and m for male.

[7]All transcripts were simplified for readability. For more detailed transcripts of the discussions, see Krogull 2018 and Wagener 2018a.

Em   yes and … and then they would have to pay more and then sometimes
     it does also not get there

Fm   and that is why we are only allowed to … send letters because these are easier
     to get through customs than packages

In this sequence, the young sponsors point out that they wanted to send a duck cuddle toy to their sponsored child Anastasia, because ducks are her favourite animal. It is visible in this short excerpt that the individual wishes and interests of the sponsored child – here a certain enthusiasm for ducks – becomes the starting point of the young sponsors' actions in the sponsorship. They see Anastasia as an individual with specific interests, and it is important to them to be aware of these interests and to consider these in the contact with her. Thus, Anastasia's love of ducks is the central criterion for choosing a gift for her. This short extract shows a perspective on the sponsorship as a welfare structure for a concrete person to whom the young sponsors maintain a personal relationship. Thus, actions in the context of the sponsorship are accordingly directed to the specific sponsored child.

Such an orientation can be seen in various parts of the empirical material, for example in the discussion of group Cockatoo which consists of six pupils of grade thirteen. In this excerpt, the young sponsors say that they wanted to show other people a photo of their sponsored child Benny* and in doing do felt as if this child was their "little child" and "their own baby":

Group Cockatoo, Passage "Experience", 0:11:18 – 0:18:13, l. 56-65

Af   Because I still know … when Markus or who was it I have no idea
     posted on facebook hey does someone have the Benny* photo
     cause I nee– so I would like to quickly show it to my parents

Bf   yes that was me

Af   oh so that was you (laughing)

Bf   (laughing) that was me (laughing)

All (laughing)

Af   or I don't know someone wanted to show it and then I thought he is
     like our little child somehow …our (laughing) own baby (laughing)

Focussing on the individual child, as shown in the excerpt from groups Lapwing and Cockatoo, is typical of a mode of concretisation visible in the entire empirical data of the study, in which the sponsorship is perceived as a personal care relationship and the young sponsors are thus guided by their responsibility for the well-being of their sponsored child. In this ideal type, the child's neediness, which forms the basis of the sponsorship setting, is considered the individual need of a well-known person and is treated within the realm of a personal care relationship. The support relationship between the sponsors and the sponsored child and, from the perspective of the sponsors, the experiences of supporting a person in the Global South are detached from the global context. The focus is on the very concrete and individual context and the personal support relationship. The sponsorship experiences – for example the neediness of the child and the support through sponsoring – are not put in a more general context

regarding complex issues and causes of development problems or approaches to overcome them. Similarly, the experiences of (economic) difference are dealt with within the context of the concrete individual case, while a reflection of this experience in its abstract implications connected with world society is not visible and, accordingly, no societal perspective on perceived differences is developed. Learning in terms of understanding complex challenges and in particular abstract social relationships in the world society does not take place in this way.[8]

Generalisation. The second typical orientation, the mode of generalisation, which was also reconstructed and developed by means of various group discussions of the sample, will be illustrated by an excerpt from the discussion of group Owl. This group, who sponsors a boy called Niam in Kenya, consists of seven pupils of grade twelve. In their discussion, the students say that part of their monthly donations is some extra money for gifts that their sponsored child receives for his birthday and for Christmas. In contrast to group Lapwing, gifts are presented as a standard feature of the sponsorship. Although the young sponsors pay for these gifts, they are not personally involved in choosing the presents. While the students of group Lapwing consider the aspect of giving as part of their personal relationship with the sponsored child, this aspect plays no significant role for group Owl.[9] Gifts to the sponsored child are not regarded as personal gifts. To them, instead, the usefulness of presents is crucial. In their understanding, gifts to the sponsored child are mainly practical everyday things such as school materials and pyjamas:

Group Owl, Introduction Passage, (0:00:49 – 0:07:22), l. 86-103

Af   I think he has written that he got new pyjamas is that possible?–

?   yes (and they wanted to build a house)

?   hmh

Af   and that he was totally happy about … finally getting new pyjamas
        … but I am not really sure … is that possible?

Cf   yes (.) I think that this is good

?   yes (.) new clothes he got too

Af   new clothes–

Cf   yes

?f   yes

Af   and there you see … how badly off the children there are–

Cf   yes [unintelligible]

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[8]The discussion at the end of the article will elaborate on the teachers' role in enabling a wider perspective and linking students' experiences to the global dimension in order to encourage abstract reflection processes with regard to the world society.
[9]The comparison of the extracts from the two groups Lapwing and Owl is used as an example to illustrate different ways of dealing with the sponsorship that ultimately led to the reconstruction of the different ideal types presented in this article. It is important to note that extracts from other groups (and in particular groups with students of different ages) could have been used in the same way since the ideal types are not restricted to certain age groups.

?   yes

Af   that they are so happy about new pyjamas right? So I think it sort of is
        a little horrifying

?   yes … about such small things

In this excerpt, the young sponsors express that their sponsored boy Niam was very happy to finally have new pyjamas. They tell that he also got some other clothes. The students interpret the gifts and Niam's assumed happiness about these as a proof of the neediness of children "there" and are, according to their own statement, horrified by this. The short discourse of the students of group Owl shows a pattern that is visible at various points in their discussion: The young people talk about an experience they had in the sponsorship, often with regard specifically to their sponsored child, and deduce general knowledge about people living in a vague and unspecified "there". It becomes obvious at other parts of the discussion that by using the vague expression "there" the young sponsors mainly refer to Africa as a whole. In the short excerpt above it is visible that assumptions and impressions of neediness and poverty in other parts of the world and especially in Africa form the basis on which the young sponsors act and think in their sponsorship. In contrast to the extracts from group Lapwing and group Cockatoo above, the perception of the sponsored child of group Owl is mainly concentrated on the necessity of the child, which is why, from their perspective, the child can be made happy with useful objects. The individuality of the child and his personal interests is minimised compared to the general need of an imagined collective ("how badly off the children there are"). The impressions of neediness and poverty "there" are accompanied by the implicit notion that their own life differs significantly from that of people in an African country. The young sponsors are horrified since "children there" are unbelievably happy about getting new pyjamas due to their general lack of everyday things, while children in their own life context would not be grateful for the same thing. Living conditions in Africa are perceived as deficient; and a stereotypical understanding of a poor and needy Africa is documented. The young sponsors implicitly contrast this image of a needy Africa with living conditions in their own context. They construct life in Africa as different to their own life and thereby adopt a clear hierarchy: the life of the sponsored child *there* lacks what is normal in their own context *here*.

A similar orientation is visible in various other group discussions, for example in the discussion of group Albatross, which consists of five pupils of grade eight to ten and which sponsors several children in different countries. Shortly after the start of their discussion, the young sponsors talk about their sponsored children and express what they want to achieve with their donations:

Group Albatross, Introduction Passage, 0:00:52 – 0:07:36, l. 68-100

Bf: but also … that the whole l– that the whole life situation and the living conditions simply get better that means that there is enough food the … the clothes are enough simply that this basic equipment also … is given and … yes that is why so there are also many … different so many dif– different personalities from different … parts of the … world as our sponsored children … one is from Hawaii °I think°

?:   Haiti*

Bf: Haiti* Haiti* … from Sri Lanka* and from–

Df: Sambia*

Bf: Sambia* … exactly … and there one notices directly that … the developing countries are very so that there are really problems everywhere and that also help should and must be given everywhere … and it is quite diverse also … yes

Af: So it is somehow really also a problem when one … we here cannot imagine what kind of life they live because we live here in such a modern world and everything is … yes technical wise or generally very developed … mobility and really … yes one cannot imagine this … such a life at all because it is yes really … I don't know on the breadline and it is like a tightrope act– actually because they are often dependent on the smallest … yes on on the smallest things simply … or often have to work already as children to be able to even survive and that … yes really that the whole family holds together.

When discussing the goals of their sponsorship, the young sponsors describe that they want to achieve an improvement in terms of living conditions and especially the provision of food and clothing – subsumed under the term "basic equipment". At this point, they are talking about living conditions in other parts of the world and specifically so-called "developing countries". The support provided in the sponsorship is therefore placed in the context of deficient living conditions in countries of the Global South, which according to the young sponsors are determined by a constant struggle for livelihood. The comments on large differences in the standard of living and on living on the breadline, which people in Germany cannot imagine, point to a dichotomous conception of the world in which the "modern world" of all (potential) donors in the North is contrasted with the life "on the breadline" of the needy people in the South. Similarly to the extract from the discussion of group Owl, there are general assumptions of neediness and poverty in other parts of the world which form the basis on which the young sponsors think about and conceptualize their sponsorship.

The orientation patterns visible in the extracts from group Owl and Albatross were – by means of various group discussions of the sample – developed into an ideal type called generalisation. In this type, not only a perception of the Global South determined by lack and extreme poverty becomes visible, but also a hierarchical contrasting of North and South is dominant. Furthermore, the central feature of the Global South is a general neediness, which can be alleviated by the support of the wealthy Global North. Global North and Global South are constructed as contrasts with the former being superior to the latter. In the generalisation type the sponsored child is therefore interpreted as an example of the people in the Global South. While the neediness of the child is regarded as an authentic expression of a general neediness of people in the Global South, in the same way the sponsorship is considered an authentic reflection of global relations. The sponsored child is not focussed as a real individual (as is the case in the type of concretisation), but rather represents a generally deficient and needy Global South. This generalisation refers to a dichotomous and hierarchical worldview and to stereotypical representations of the Global South and therefore indicates a simplified conceptualisation of the world society. Perceived disparities in the world are seen as differences between different and completely separable societies, and are not

considered internal differences of *one* world society. This conceptualisation hinders a more differentiated understanding of world society and of the challenges the world as a whole is facing.

In summary, the types of concretisation and generalisation presented here represent two empirically reconstructed forms of dealing with complexity, which are both dysfunctional for understanding the complexity of world society and its fundamental developmental challenges. In concretisation, the global dimension of the asymmetrical welfare situation of the sponsorship is not relevant at all because the focus is on the individual child and a concrete personal care relationship. In generalisation the understanding of the sponsorship as a representation of a hierarchical relationship between Global North and Global South is not related to the complexity of global developmental questions. There are, therefore, two different empirically reconstructed ways of dealing with the experiences of sponsoring and helping a child in the Global South: the experiences are dealt with either in a concrete or in a generalised way. With regard to the complexity of world society, however, both processes indicate forms of reduction that are not related to the complexity of global social questions.

Young People in North-South School Encounters

The second learning situation to be addressed is the North-South encounter. This research project focused on the learning experiences of young people in Bolivia Germany, and Rwanda who took part in such encounters and on how those young people understood world society after the encounter. Each group discussion started with the same stimulus: "You went to [country] [number] years/months ago. You certainly did a lot of things, experienced a lot of things, and had lots of experiences. Unfortunately, I was not there. So, tell me about your trip." While the groups discussed this, the interlocutor only interrupted to ask for examples in order to understand their statements further. In case the groups had not spoken about it during the discussion, open stimuli to talk about intercultural experiences, every-day life in the country visited and life after the return home were given.

A central result of the study is that all groups focused on differences while some diversity can be seen regarding where they perceived those differences, how they generalized them to establish an order and how they used those differences for learning. As a result of this research, a multidimensional, tripartite typology of the understanding of world society was developed (Krogull, 2018). The different types of world societal understanding were linked to the organizational background of the groups, not their geographic origin. In the following, only the type which could be attributed to schools (not to the international youth organization or the church) will be presented.

The school groups of the sample are the Bolivian group Garnet[10], the Rwandan groups Malachite and Larimar (all of which travelled to Germany), and the German groups Emerald (travelled to Bolivia) and Onyx (travelled to Rwanda). School groups perceive differences, above all, in their immediate personal sphere and in relation to it,

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[10]For reasons of anonymization, all groups were named after gemstones and people were lettered in alphabetical order and with f for female and m for male in the transcript.

in things which directly impact their everyday lives or are part of their everyday experiences. As an example, the Rwandan group Malachite (four female Rwandan high school students, aged 15-18) talks about their experiences during the encounter:

Rwandan Group Malachite, Passage "Germany is different from Rwanda", l. 70-91[11]

Cf:	Even the German building style is different than in in in Rwanda–
Af:	mhm
Cf:	because we use small bricks … while the Germans use … the large bricks
Af:	There are many streets … that are large
Df:	mhm
Cf:	many there there was much move– movement
Af:	yes
Cf:	but … we move … on foot
Af:	on foot
Cf:	whereas they …
Af:	there are many [unintelligible]
Cf:	everyone had the means … of transportation …
Bf:	everyone … has his car
Af:	has his car has his bicycle
Cf:	everyone drives his bike

After having been asked about their experiences during the encounter, the Rwandan group Malachite discusses differences in the opening section of the group discussion, mentioning among others the differences in building styles and transportation. Those aspects belong to their every-day experiences, to their perceptible surroundings. Similarly, the Bolivian group Garnet, the Rwandese group Larimar and the German groups Emerald and Onyx mention differences in transportation, food, house chores, but also the natural surroundings, insofar as it influences their daily routine (e.g., the time when the sun sets), market and shopping experiences or dressing styles.

Those differences are not just described by the groups, but are presented in a dichotomous way, e.g., black-white, poor-rich, developed-underdeveloped, but which ultimately all lead back to a North-South dichotomy: There are those who are rich, white, and developed, who have cars, computers, and machines. Then there are those who are black, poor, and underdeveloped, who walk on foot, lack equipment, and use manual labor to cultivate their fields. The German group Onyx (4 female and 1 male high school student, aged 16-18) may serve as an example:

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[11]The line designations are based on the original transcripts in the respective languages.

German Group Onyx, Passage "Living in Rwanda", l. 626-656

Ef: Yes and what was really nice was was just to see a little of the country somehow anyway a bit of culture we then yes we went to a farmer to his field they had such a banana plantation …

Am: banana plantation yes

Ef: exactly that was really interesting to live there because we have lived there in rather simple conditions compared to our standards but for them it was nevertheless–

Am: luxurious for Rwandese standards

Ef: very luxurious, well just because they had running water and electricity and they tried to do really everything there and also the cooking, they had lots of food … simple and then well yes then we also saw those poor people in the fields we saw how they live that was somehow really interesting

The differences which are perceived by the group Onyx are not just described in terms of what they see, but – by comparing them to the group's own situation – they are assessed and transferred into a hierarchical order where one side is allocated a higher value than the other: the Global North is superior to the Global South. A comparable perspective is taken by the Rwandan group Larimar (4 male high school students, aged 17-20):

Rwandan Group Larimar, Passage "Experiences in Germany", l. 119-125

Bm: and for me the second was … to travel into a family … of the whites … we shared food at the same table … that is d– d the second thing that drove me and … and … another thing in the lesson to go … you you sit with someone a German I a German a German the whole class belonged to Germans and I the Rwandan that is very good and is proud but sit down with I the the German friends

The Rwandan group Larimar discusses their experiences while living with the German families and going to school with their exchange students. The superiority of the North that was reconstructed from the group discussions of the German groups can also be seen among the Rwandese groups. They describe their pride to be sharing the same table with the white people and sitting among white students in a classroom. The perceived differences are allocated with values while at the same time these dichotomies are represented as unhistorical and static: the North is superior to the South or the South is inferior to the North. By using those hierarchical dichotomies an order is created, which is based on upgrading and downgrading. In groups from the Global North one sees paternalism, in groups from the Global South, self-abasement with simultaneous upgrading of the North.

While groups coming from other organizations use the perceived differences as motivation for change, school groups see very few possibilities of changing something, besides supporting the Global South through money donation, child sponsorships or financial development aid. Instead, the perceived differences are stabilized through the acquisition of additional, experience-based knowledge which was accumulated during the journey. This knowledge is selectively assimilated such that it strengthens and stabilizes one's own perspective, while irritations are ignored as shown in the following transcript by the German group Emerald (4 female high school students, aged 15-17):

German Group Emerald, Passage "Passing Knowledge Along", l. 763-771

Aw: And now we brought the Bolivians … I mean the Bolivian exchange students yes also practically their poverty in their country somewhat closer, I think that is already a big step … simply that they again see the reality in their country again … in a developing country so to speak … and yes

Bw: And they will surely talk about that further … and that helps then too

Aw: yes

Despite the fact, that the Bolivian exchange partners came from the upper middle class and had a similar standard to the German group (if not higher) if transferred to the German context, the German students repeatedly insist that Bolivia is a developing country. They not only criticize their Bolivian partners for not wanting to see the poverty in their own country but continuously emphasize all the aspects which make Bolivia appear as being poor and underdeveloped.

World society is seen by the school groups not from a societal perspective, but is rather constructed as an addition of social proximities, which are contained in a hierarchical internal relation to one another. The encounter permits access to those proximities, to other social perceivable surroundings, but without producing a common, (world-) societal perspective. Such an understanding of world society appears to be functional for the students in their exchange situation which is characterized by uncertainty and emotional overload, but which is dysfunctional for understanding the complexity of world society and its fundamental developmental challenges.

Discussion

While child sponsorship programmes are used within the school context in order to provide opportunities for experiencing global diversity and inequality and thereby encourage learning with regard to world society, North-South school encounters additionally intend for students to experience similarities despite economic differences. This fosters an understanding of an interconnected world where the behaviour of the one has consequences for the life of the other, where borders are no boundaries to the world society. By integrating these settings in their regular activities, schools therefore aim at expanding social learning to the global context and supporting the development of solidarity with people in different countries all over the world and the understanding of an interconnected world. The empirical findings from research on young people engaged in child sponsorship programmes and in North-South-encounters, however, indicate limits of global and world societal learning in these settings. First, the results show that students engaged in these contexts are focused on social proximities 'here' and 'there' and do not put their experiences in a world societal context. Through processes of concretization, the sponsorship is considered a personal care relationship for a sponsored child in a country in the Global South whose neediness results from very specific life circumstances. In a similar way, students in North-South-encounters perceive differences on the level of social proximity and do not develop a societal perspective on their experiences. Second, learning experiences of young students in

both settings are characterized by processes of hierarchization in which the inferior Global South is characterized by poverty and neediness while the superior Global North is expected to solve these problems and provide assistance to the South. This dichotomous perspective on developmental challenges is not related to the complexity of global social issues and therefore dysfunctional for understanding world society.

The results of the two studies point to several valuable insights with regard to educating world citizens at schools and in particular in geography education:

a) Creating contexts and opportunities for students to experience globalization and its effects on people in the world through encounter settings and through engaging students in forms of practical solidarity does not necessarily encourage abstract societal learning. While such personal experiences allow authenticity and are therefore a central aspect of learning, they do not automatically encourage abstract learning necessary to understand the complexity of world society (cf. Scheunpflug, 1996, 2001; Scheunpflug & Schmidt, 2002). From a theoretical perspective, this suggests that contexts of informal learning about global issues in schools, which take place in direct and concrete experiences, need formal learning structures to promote abstract reflection (cf. Krogull 2011; Wagener, 2018a; Wagener 2018b; Krogull 2018). For the school context, the empirical findings of both studies stress the importance of school based learning towards globalisation and its consequences for students. Supporting this, it was visible in the two studies that teachers accompanying the students in their activities play a vital role with regard to encouraging and supporting processes of reflection and bringing in different perspectives. Hence, there is a need for teachers to not only initiate forms of practical solidarity, but to support students in linking these experiences to the global dimension. In order to do so it is the teachers' role to lead the students to a wider perspective. This includes, for example, a more differentiated view on development problems.

b) Instead of challenging stereotypical hierarchical world views and supporting the development of a more differentiated understanding of world society, asymmetric settings such as engaging students in gathering donations for supporting people in the South – in the case of the two studies either the sponsored child or a partner school – encourage such simplified perspectives. First, this finding again points to the relevance of teachers accompanying the learning process and intentionally challenging common stereotypical understandings of developmental issues. This is a challenge, as teachers sometimes tend to have the same simplified perspective on the relation between the Global North and the Global South (Krogull, 2018). Due to its thematic focus, geography education could describe a differentiated understanding of developmental issues and challenge the not sufficiently complex concept of "developing country" used as an umbrella category for countries of the Global South. Second, however, it becomes visible that implicitly asymmetric structures of social practices foster asymmetric perspectives. This has already been empirically demonstrated in other studies on Global Learning in schools (Asbrand, 2009; Kater-Wettstädt, 2015). From a more general perspective, this finding indicates that the structural set-up of a learning situation in terms of its connectivity to the complexity

of world society is crucial: Structurally simplified settings in this sense tend to encourage simplified perspectives and inhibit the development of a more differentiated understanding (cf. Wagener, 2018a; Krogull & Scheunpflug, 2013).

c) The overall empirical findings show that students engaged in encounter settings as well as in child sponsoring programmes learn *about* the South: they learn about living conditions in a country in the Global South or the life of a specific person and they learn about cultural and religious aspects in this respect. They do not, however, develop a common, global perspective on these unequal living conditions in which different people in different countries come into view as world citizens. From a theoretical perspective, and with regard to a *global* geography education aimed at educating world citizens, this finding points to the challenge of, on the one hand, learning *about* other countries as one central aspect of geography education and, on the other hand, producing a global, world-societal perspective at the same time (Gaudelli & Heilman, 2009). This research shows that the former does not automatically include the latter.

Conclusion

Against the background of the empirical findings, theoretical perspectives, and practices of geography education, geography education may play a crucial part in introducing a world societal perspective into school as it deals not only with countries but with the whole world. In the light of the empirical results presented, a *global* geography education in this respect must include opportunities for abstract learning and thereby contextualize and complement informal learning experiences. The settings for experiencing world society that schools often provide in addition to regular lessons do not automatically initiate abstract global perspectives. In order to educate global citizens, teachers must therefore establish a clear link between informal and formal learning with regard to world society and thereby support students in understanding the global dimension of activities such as sponsoring and encounter. In this regard students can benefit from phases of deliberate reflection within the lessons, in which their own experiences are reflected upon in a critically reflexive manner against the background of lesson-based knowledge regarding global issues. Moreover, geography education must encourage a change of perspective in order to challenge stereotypical hierarchical and paternalistic world views that were predominant in the findings of the two empirical studies presented and have been shown to be common among students in various other studies. In dealing with world society, learners need to be given opportunities to recognize their own perspective and to take on previously unknown perspectives and to view facts from different point of views. To this end, and in a more general perspective, geography education must provide adequately complex learning situations that reflect the complexity of global issues. Although geography education is of central importance, it is this complexity that nevertheless requires an interdisciplinary perspective including all social subjects and beyond to move towards world societal learning in schools.

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